ments are swayed by the supposed beneficial or prejudicial consequences of actions. The mother at Athens murdered her child rather than expose it through life to poverty and growing hardship. The Indian drowns his mother in the Ganges, the Caffre exposes her by some fountain, and they justify their conduct on the ground that it is better she should thus perish than drag out a protracted life of misery. The Greeks and Romans defended the practice of suicide, and argued that life should terminate when it ceases to be useful. The modern gentleman thinks it nothing improper to fight a duel, and tells us that it is only by such a practice that a nice sense of honour can be maintained. The Frenchman of the days of Louis XIV. prided himself on his gay and gallant behaviour, on his liberty or licentiousness, as necessary to the production of the easy and lively manners which prevailed at that period.

Dr. Adam Smith, opening up another vein in the same mine, has shown how fortune, utility, custom, and fashion, have all their influence on the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation.* He shows how the " effect of the influence of fortune is first to diminish our sense of the merit or demerit of those actions which arise from the most laudable or blamable intentions, when they fail of producing their proposed effects ; and, secondly, to increase our sense of the merit or demerit of actions, beyond what is due to the motives or affections from which they proceed, when they accidentally give occasion either to pleasure or pain/' "The superiority of virtues and talents has not, even upon those who acknowledge that superiority, the same effect as the superiority of achievements." *Ci* The agreeable or disagreeable effects of actions often throw a shadow of merit or demerit upon the agent, though in his intention there was nothing that deserved either praise or blame, or at least that deserved them in the degree in which we are

apt to bestow them. Thus, even the messenger of bad news is disagreeable to us, and, on the contrary, we feel a sort of gratitude to the man who brings us good tidings." He shows how custom and fashion influence our moral sentiments. " Those who have been educated in what is really good company, not what is commonly called such, who have been accustomed to see nothing in the persons whom they esteemed and lived with, but justice,

* See Theory of Moral Sentiments* P- h. sect. Hi., P. iv., P. v. elinp. ii.